Planning Series

White Lake Provincial Park

Preliminary Management Plan

Ontario

Ministry of Natural Resources

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PARK MANAGEMENT PLANNING SERIES

WHITE LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK

PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT PLAN

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FOREWORD

I am pleased to release this preliminary management plan for White Lake Provincial Park. It is a statement of policy for the protection, management and development of park resources. It also provides guidance for the preparation of plans for resource management, client services and development to implement park policies and achieve park objectives.

I encourage you to read this plan and give us your views. Talk to my staff in the Wawa District Office or forward your comments to the District Manager Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 1160, Wawa, Ontario, POS 1KO.

Your participation will assist us in refining this plan leading to the preparation of an approved park management plan for White Lake Provincial Park.

Thank you.

M. A. Klugman
Regional Director
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1. THE PARK

White Lake Provincial Park is situated on Highway 17, 35 km west of White River and 71 km east of Marathon (Figure 1). The park area is 1723 ha and includes part of White Lake and Dunc Lake.

The park was opened in 1962, just after Hwy 17 was completed. There are 187 campsites, a large day use area, a group camping area, an outdoor theatre and many other outdoor recreation facilities. The park has always been a popular stopover for travellers on Hwy 17 and a destination for fishermen. The park is becoming more popular for weekend camping and day-use by a growing local population associated with the Hemlo gold field developments in the Marathon-White River area.

The moderately broken landscape has till covered hills, sand flats and wetlands. The sand shoreline along White Lake is one of the most popular features of the park . A mixed boreal forest covers the park area.

2. PARK POLICIES

2.1 CLASSIFICATION

The classification of White Lake Provincial Park will be changed from a Recreation class park to a Natural Environment class park.

Within the large park area there are numerous examples of glaciofluvial features that are representative of the White Lake/White River area. Associated with these landforms is a vegetation pattern also typical of the location of the park.

The trail network and lack of easy access to lakes such as Clearwater allow for low intensity recreation experiences.

The park area provides a staging area for backcountry recreation on the White River and to Pukaskwa National Park.

2.2 GOAL

To protect and manage the White Lake Provincial Park landscape for high quality recreation and heritage appreciation experiences.

2.3 OBJECTIVES

.Protection

"To protect provincially significant natural environments incorporating natural, cultural and recreation features".

The park landscape is representative of post glacial activity in this part of Ontario. The park also has examples of plant species with southern affinities; wetlands; and vegetation typical of the southern Boreal region. (see 2.4.3).

.Recreation

"To provide Provincial Park outdoor recreation opportunities ranging from high-intensity day use to low-intensity backcountry opportunities."

The park will provide an annual supply of 8,800 dayuse opportunities ranging from picnic areas, swimming beaches, boat launches, play areas to walking trails.

The park will provide an annual supply of 52,200 car camping opportunities. An additional annual supply of 25,600 car camping opportunities are available, if required, by re-opening the Area 2 Campground.

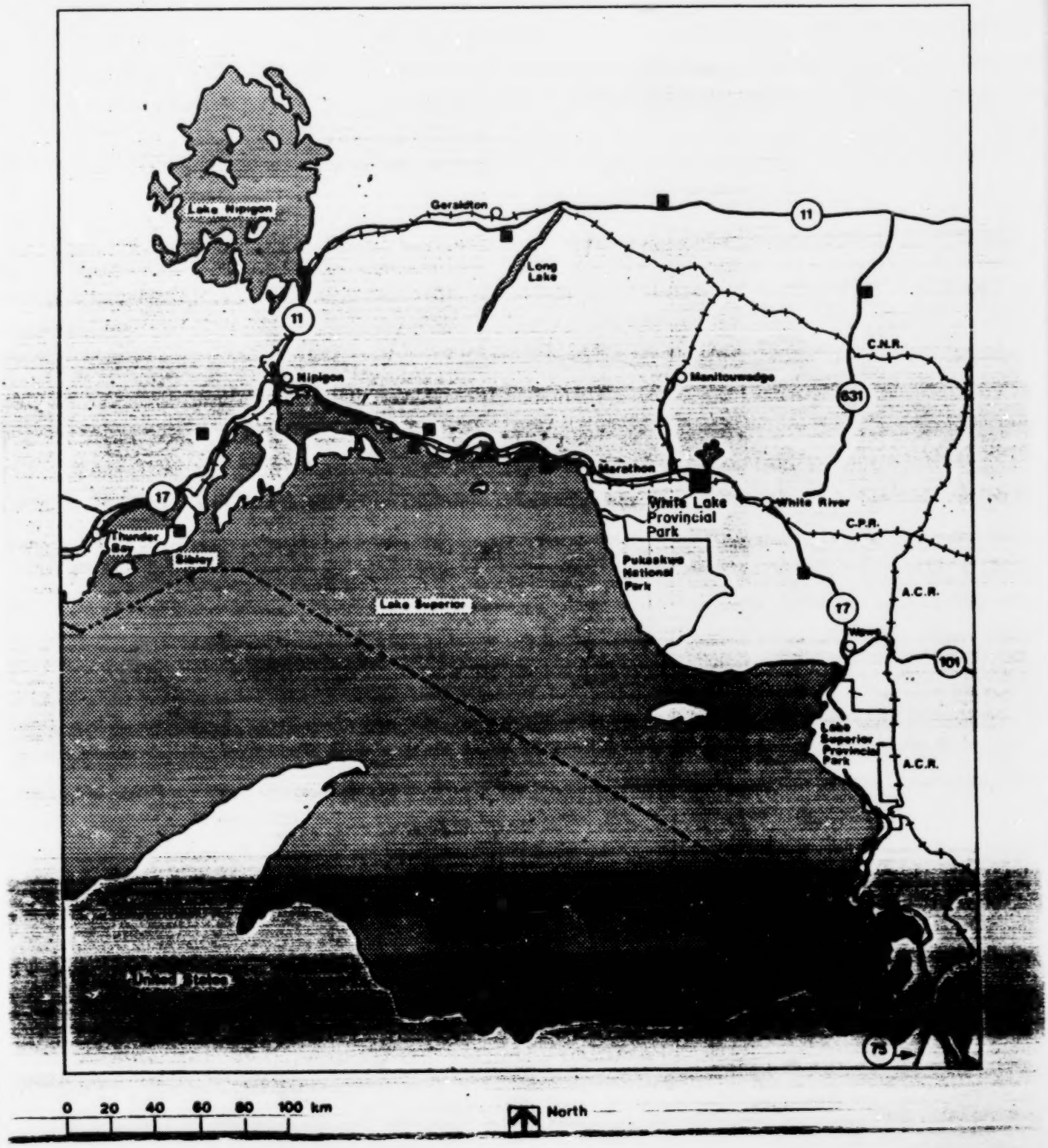
Backcountry dayuse opportunities are provided on the trail network in the park. Access is available to the backcountry travel and camping opportunities outside the park on the White River.

.Heritage Appreciation

"To provide opportunities for individual exploration and appreciation of the natural and cultural environment heritage of the park area".

Figure 1

White Lake Provincial Park
Regional Setting



Individual exploration and appreciation of the park's resources will be encouraged through publications, displays and trails.

.Tourism

"To provide Ontario residents and out-of-province visitors with opportunities to discover and experience a distinctive part of the Province."

White Lake Park will provide day use and camping opportunities for passing travellers as well as destination camping opportunities. Co-operation with the local tourism industry will be encouraged without adversely affecting the park environment or the visitors's experience.

2.4 PARK ZONING

The lands and waters within White Lake Provincial Park have been zoned so that they may be allocated to their most appropriate use. There is a development zone, natural environment zone and 2 nature reserve zones (Figure 2). Detailed development and management policies for these zones can be found in Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies.

2.4.1 Development zone (122 hectares)

The development zone provides the main access to the park and contains the facilities and services for intensive day use camping, group camping and recreational activities.

Development may include roads; visitor control structures, day use facilities; car campgrounds; basic commercial service facilities for visitors; interpretive, educational and research facilities and management facilities.

Existing day-use and camping facilities will be maintained at, and any new facilities will be developed to, standards which will encourage natural environment based activities and provide for uncrowded conditions and relative freedom from intrusions of fellow recreationists.

Special management consideration includes the erosion problems along the shoreline of White Lake and the protection of the Red Pine within the campgrounds.

2.4.2 Natural Environment Zone (1173 h)

The natural environment zone includes attractive landscapes in which there is minimum development required to support low intensity recreational activities.

Development will be limited to back country campsites, portages, trails, necessary signs for route identification, minimal interpretive facilities and similar simple facilities that will support low intensity recreational activities.

2.4.3 Nature Reserve Zones

Nature reserve zones protect significant earth and life science features.

Development will be limited to trails, necessary signs, minimal interpretive facilities and temporary facilities for research and management.

N.R. 1 Clearwater Lake (419 h)

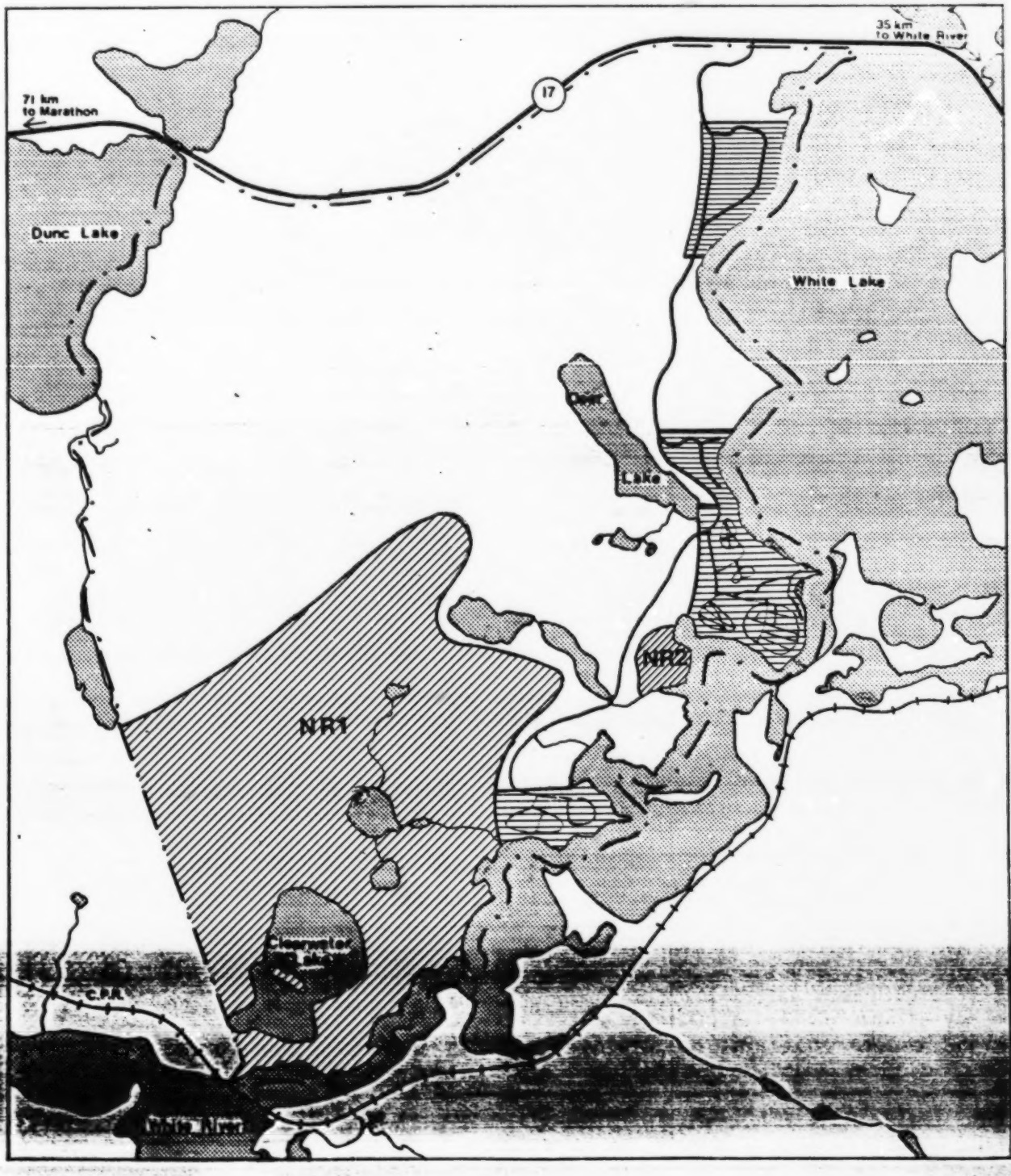
Earth science features include examples typical of glaciofluvial and glaciolocustrine deposits. These include a kettled outwash plain modified by lake waters, morainic deposits; a clearwater lake; aeolian deposits; glaciofluvial ice-contact and shoreline depositional features such as cuspate spits.

Life science features include extensive stands of intolerant pioneer forest dominated by aspen or jack pine as well as wetland communities such as marshes, open and treed bogs and coniferous swamps occupy drainage ways and kettle depressions. It is in these wetlands that a great many of the park's orchid species are found. The portion of the nature reserve zone that borders on White Lake also includes shoreline marshes.

Figure 2

Zoning

- Park Boundary
- Nature Reserve Zone
- Natural Environment Zone
- Development Zone



NR 2 Red Pine (9 hectares)

The only known stand of Red Pine outside of the campground. Stands of Red Pine are scarce in the central Lake Superior area.

2.5 ISSUE: PARK VISITATION TRENDS

The rapid development of the nearby Hemlo goldfields has put pressure on the park facilities and staff. Park use peaked in 1984 in conjunction with the construction phase of the goldmine development.

In the long term, indicators show that the park use will decline, relieving some of the present pressure on the park. The major mine construction phase should be over by 1986 and the number of construction workers requiring temporary accommodation should drop. New housing is quickly being built in Marathon and Manitouwadge in response to the demand for housing for goldminers and their families.

However, the local population of the two communities of Marathon and Manitouwadge is predicted to increase from 5,700 to 12,500 by the end of the decade and camping in White Lake Park by local residents will increase as the population increases. By 1987, park visitation will have dropped from the 1984 level but will be at least 20% greater than the visitation in 1983.

This 20% increase will be due to two reasons: 1) there will be more use of the park from the local population and 2) the proposed electrical service to some campsites will attract more campers with camping vehicles that use electricity.

3. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The park will be managed in accordance with the general planning and management policies for natural environment class provincial parks.

Although the policies are presented separately, all planning and management will recognize that the components are interrelated and an integrated approach will be taken in parks operation planning.

This will give park users reasonable protection from any hazards connected with contaminated drinking or bathing waters.

The water level of White Lake is determined by the dam at the south end of the lake. The dam is maintained by Engineering Services of the Ministry of Natural Resources and monitored by White Lake Park staff. The water level will be kept at an optimum level agreed upon by resource users.

3.2 FISHERIES

Sportfishing is one of the main attractions of visitors to the park. Fishing takes place on the lakes within the park and on White and Dunc Lakes adjacent to the park.

The lakes should be managed so that sportfishing will continue as a viable recreation activity for park visitors. Park staff will co-operate with Fish and Wildlfie staff when a Wawa District Fisheries Management plan is undertaken. The plan will address stocking requirements and management of natural populations in lakes within and adjacent to the park. It will also include special recognition for White Lake and the lakes within the park.

3.3 VEGETATION

Vegetation in the park will be managed to fulfill protection and recreation objectives. Management guidelines will be derived from environmental management policies for Natural Environment parks.

To maintain an attractive camping experience in the campgrounds, a vegetation management plan will be prepared for the development zone. It will include the following:

1) create a more suitable buffer between campsites, 2) rehabilitate areas lacking natural growth, 3) remove hazardous trees, 4) promote regeneration, 5) maintain vegetation cover in the beach and day use areas in an open "park-like" setting with tall trees for shade, scattered clumps of low vegetation for privacy screening and buffer vegetation between the parking lot and the day use area, 6) protect the Red Pine that are found within the campground.

3.4 WILDLIFE

Opportunities for the viewing of wildlife will be encouraged.

Hunting is not permitted within White Lake Provincial Park.

Commercial trapping is not allowed in Natural Environment Provincial Parks. It is recommened that the existing trapping rights be phased out in a manner least harmful to the existing trapper.

No new trappers or traplines will be permitted.

Removal of animals that endanger the health and safety of park visitors or park facilities will be allowed.

4. CLIENT SERVICES

4.1 VISITOR SERVICES

The Visitor Services program will provide visitors with an opportunity to gain an understanding, awareness and appreciation of White Lake Provincial Park and its objectives, policies and heritage. This will be achieved through the policies for the following components of the Visitor Services program. Visitor Services planning will guide the best combination of these components in keeping with self use and recreational emphasis. Co-operation will continue with Pukaskwa National Park as well as other provincial parks along highway 17.

4.1.1 Communications

Information concerning park resources management, facilities, programs, and nearby points of interest will be available at key points throughout the park (park gatehouse, comfort station, etc.).

Information will be made available in the form of a park leaflet, information displays, special publications as required and through informed park staff.

4.1.2 Interpretation

The park interpretive program will create a greater understanding of the natural and cultural values of the parks themes:

.White Lake and its Environs
.Logging the White River Watershed
.The Canadian Pacific Railway
.The Fur Trade
.Native History
.The Boreal Forest
.Outdoor Recreation
.Glaciation and the Canadian Shield
.Hemlo - A Modern Goldrush

The interpretive program may consist of self-use facilities and staff-led activities. The self-use facilities will include such things as the Deer Lake rail and guide, the display area for the Water Tank Sleigh historical exhibit and the Tiny Bog Trail. There is potential for a mining theme exhibit area at a site that would tie into the existing Visitor Services operations.

Interpretive programs may be held at the amphitheatre and the Visitor Centre. Conducted walks, campfire shows, demonstrations, campsite visitations, and other activities may be presented on a scheduled basis.

4.1.3 Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor Recreation programming will concentrate on water-related activities such as boating safety, canoeing skills, sport fishing, and water safety.

4.2 RESEARCH

Research related to the needs of resource management (e.g. vegetation, fisheries) will have priority. All activity will follow the policies for research in Provincial Parks.

4.3 MARKETING

Attracting additional people from the Highway 17 travel corridor will continue. Through upgrading of park facilities and services (see resource management, development and client services sections of this plan), staff training, and co-operation with local outfitters and businesses, visitors will be encouraged to stay longer and also return to the park in the future.

The 1982 camper survey, for example, showed that 66% of the campers at the park used motor homes, trailers, vans, etc. Camping vehicles like these are often equipped to use electrical power. Electrical outlets at campsites would make the park more attractive to campers.

The use of the park by the residents of Marathon, Manitouwadge and White River has been steadily increasing. The upgrading of facilities and services, staff training and local outfitting services will also help increase use of the park by local residents. Marketing of the park locally at the beginning and end of the camping season will help increase use in the traditionally slow period for camping by people on vacation.

The park staff will continue to cooperate in marketing efforts with other provincial parks. This includes such things as making sure that park information is available at tourist information centres and at other parks on Highway 17.

A potential secondary market is the backcountry traveller. White Lake Park, in co-operation with Pukaskwa National Park, is being used by people canoeing the White River as a staging area for their trips. Facilities and services for this type of park visitor can also be used to serve recreationists inside and outside the park.

The marketing plan for the park will be updated as required.

5. DEVELOPMENT

All development within White Lake Provincial Park will reflect the standards for a Natural Environment class park. Development projects will be proposed through work program planning and special funding initiatives (Figure 3). All development will be carried out in accordance with approved site and development plans. Once the development takes place, it will be managed according to the operating plan for the park. The requirements for the Environmental Assessment Act will also be met.

5.1 CAR CAMPING USE

In response to the needs of park visitors and also to help increase camping use, additional electrical service to campsites is required. Fourteen additional campsites with electrical service will be provided in the Woodlily campground.

The group camping area is becoming more popular for local groups and adult groups travelling together on Highway 17. A second group camping area is required, preferably separate from the existing group camping area.

5.2 DAY USE

The day use parking lot will be upgraded to increase the parking capacity. To reduce conflicts between other uses, the boat launch may have to be closed. The boat launch near the Area 2 campground could replace the boat launch closed in Area 1.

5.3 BACKCOUNTRY USE

The area south of the day use parking lot will be developed as a staging area for backcountry users. Facilities needed include a storage area for boat and canoe trailers and open space areas near the water to allow canoe trippers to get organized. The boat registration booth for Pukaskwa National Park will also be part of this staging area.

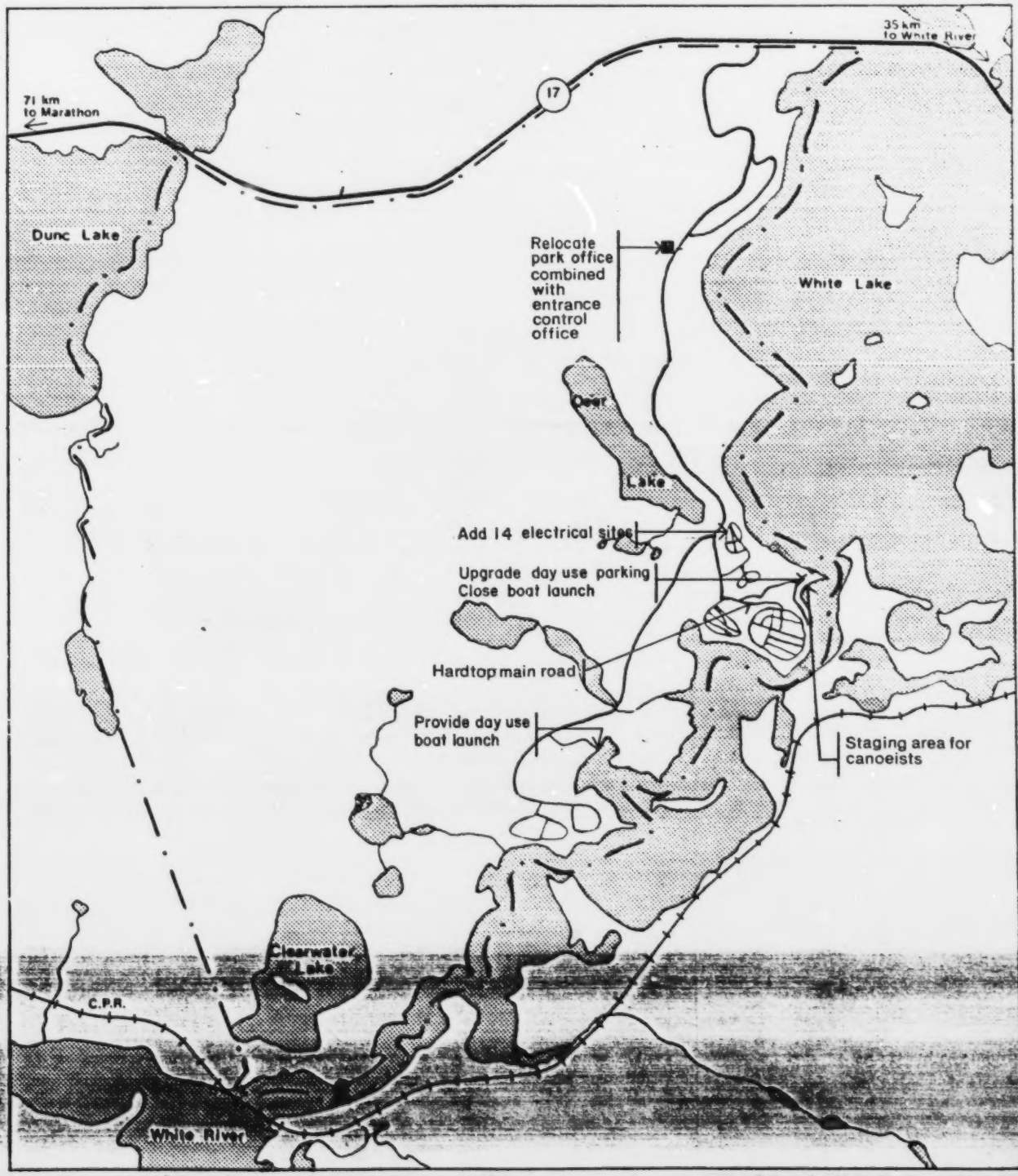
5.4 PARK OFFICE/ENTRANCE CONTROL

A park office is needed to provide adequate working space for the park superintendent and park clerk. The new site should be associated with the park entrance control so that it is convenient for both park staff and park visitors. A development plan is required.

Figure 3

Development Concept

Park Boundary



5.5 ACCESS AND CAMPGROUND ROADS

The main road through the campgrounds and to the day use area should be hardtopped. This would alleviate the dust and maintenance problems.

6. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION

The recommended development will be started with the formal approval of this management plan. The number of projects completed will be based on annual work program planning and alternative funding proposals.

6.1.1 Priorities

Available funding - work program planning.

.Park classification change

Resource Management Planning

.vegetation management plan

.park staff will assist Fish and Wildlife staff in preparing a Wawa District Fisheries Management Plan.

Client Services

.Visitor Services Plan

Additional Funding Proposals

Site and Development Planning

.electrical service in Woodlily Campground to an additional 14 campsites

.a second group camping area

.upgrade day use parking lot Area 1

.new park office /entrance control

.upgrade and hardtop main road through Area 1 campgrounds and road to Area 1 day use area.

.Mining theme exhibit area.

6.2 PLAN REVIEW

This management plan will stand for 20 years and will be reviewed after 10 years following its approval or as the need arises.

Data collection and environmental quality monitoring will be conducted regularly.

SELECT REFERENCES

NOBLE T. Central Boreal Forest Region 3E Life Science Report, Northeastern Region (1973).

OMNR Wawa District Land Use Guidelines (1983)

OMNR White Lake Provincial Park Marketing Plan (1982).

OMNR Provincial Park Camper Survey Summary Statistics Report (1982).

OMNR Provincial Park Day Use Survey Summary Statistical Report (1982).

OMNR Archaeological Survey - North Central Region (1974)